

## **MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR**

### **Health & Safety Topic #14 The NASA Safety Reporting System (NSRS)**

Lives can be, and have been, lost in our reach for the stars. In 1986, the world was horrified to watch the Space Shuttle Challenger disintegrate in a ball of flame shortly after takeoff. No one wants to be reminded of that disaster, but the fact remains much of what we do at NASA can result in a catastrophe, and the potential for these types of consequences requires a constant state of heightened awareness and care about our approach to critical tasks and missions. The NASA Safety Reporting System (NSRS) was established as one element of NASA's response to that disaster.

The NSRS is NASA's only Agency-level, voluntary, responsive, and confidential safety reporting system. VOLUNTARY means the reporting channel can be used whenever a Reporter chooses and as many times as necessary. RESPONSIVE means the reported safety concerns are evaluated and resolved in a timely fashion. CONFIDENTIAL means the Reporter's identity will never be disclosed and no submitted information shall be used directly or indirectly to identify the Reporter. This reporting system provides a valuable option for timely notification of potential risks to the public, our Astronauts and pilots, the workforce, our high-value equipment and property, and our overall mission success. As we all know, "Mission Success Starts With Safety," and the mechanism for reporting serious risks embodied in the NSRS supports the overall safe posture of our organization.

The NSRS process was initiated to complement, not replace, NASA's established safety reporting channels. A Reporter should initially notify their supervisor of any potential safety problems and use the standard safety channels available at your work sites. If this has already been done and the Reporter still has a concern with the safety of personnel, a mission, or an operation relating to engineering, manufacturing, administration, maintenance, support, or operations, then the reporting of that potential or actual problem should become highest priority. The NSRS reporting process should be used as soon as possible.

The way the system works is very simple. Any NASA employee, contractor, or crewmember may mail an NSRS reporting form to the NSRS Office, whenever they believe that it is necessary. The NSRS Reporting Form is attainable through the NSRS Web site,

**<http://www.hq.nasa.gov/nsrs>**

or is displayed prominently at the NASA Centers. This makes the form accessible whenever it is convenient--whether on the job or in the privacy of your home. Simply fill out the form, enclose it in an envelope, seal, and mail. NSRS display posters, pamphlets, brochures, lapel pins, and decals are used to remind all that the NSRS is available, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

After the contractor-operated NSRS Office receives the report, transcribes it to remove any identity to preserve anonymity, and places information into the database, it is then forwarded to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Chair at NASA Headquarters. A priority rating to the report is assigned, and the report is forwarded to the TAG Member at the applicable Center for resolution and response. After the NSRS Chair and the Agency

Director, Safety and Risk Management Division, Office of Safety and Mission Assurance agree with the resultant response and corrective action, the report is closed.

The Office of Safety and Mission Assurance received 24 NSRS reports during calendar year 1999. The concerns of the Reporters ranged from facilities to flight safety hardware.

If you are an employee, whether you are a contractor, a maintenance staff member, a career civil service employee, a manager, or a scientist, please take the time to learn more about NSRS. Success begins with safety, and this reporting program exists to support safety. We really mean it when we say our slogan, "IF IT IS NOT SAFE, SAY SO!" An anonymous NSRS report about an unsafe situation could make the world of difference between a possible tragedy and a lessons-learned report or a small policy change. The best components of the NSRS are the anonymity aspect of the program and the empowerment of employees to have an avenue in which they can truly contribute to safety by just simply slipping a free reporting form in a mailbox.

Please contact either Mr. Bill Comer, NASA NSRS Chair, at (202) 358-0590 or Ms. Kelly Kabiri, Research Planning, Inc., NSRS Contractor Office, at (703) 933-6216 if you have any questions or would like additional NSRS information.

Background and Actions/Best Practices for this topic can be found on the Administrator's Health & Safety Topics web site:

**[http://www.nasa.gov/bios/health\\_messages.html](http://www.nasa.gov/bios/health_messages.html)**

More information about the Safety Initiative can be found on the Safety web site:

**<http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/codeq/safety/index.htm>**

#### NASA Actions

- NASA OIC s, Program/Project Managers and Center Directors
  - Remind and reinforce all, concerning the potential benefit of the NSRS
  - Use the NSRS Awareness program and encourage employees to use the reporting system without fear of reprisal.
  - Ensure that the NSRS materials are clearly visible and easily accessible throughout the Centers
  - Publicize the web access address <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/nsrs>